



For Immediate Release:

Wednesday, July 2, 2008

Media Contact:

JoDee Summers

Public Information Officer

(o) 801-538-6195 (m) 801-864-8839

After hrs/weekend on call: 801-209-2591

News Release

Utahns Urged to Arm Themselves Against West Nile and Crypto *First Human West Nile Virus Case Confirmed*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The TriCounty Health Department has reported the first human case of West Nile virus in Utah. Officials there say the victim is a male resident of Uintah County between the ages of 20-40 who is recovering from flu-like symptoms. In 2007, the state reported a total of 70 human cases and two deaths. The risk of serious illness from West Nile virus increases with age, as well as for certain groups of people, including those with diabetes.

As the July 4th holiday approaches, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and local health departments are asking Utahns to protect themselves from the mosquitoes that carry the West Nile virus by remembering some simple rules:

- Always use mosquito repellents containing DEET or picaridin when outdoors from dusk to dawn. Make mosquito repellent an essential item you include in your vehicle, backpack, or purse for any outdoor activity.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants while outdoors.
- Get rid of standing water on your property to reduce mosquito populations (old tires, buckets, wading pools, etc.).

In 2007, Utah also saw a huge increase in the number of people who got sick from a waterborne illness called Cryptosporidium (commonly called “crypto”). UDOH has confirmed 12 cases of crypto in 2008 – only one of which was pool related. Swimming-related crypto can be prevented if all Utahns cooperate to keep the parasite out of pools. New regulations have been implemented to help achieve this, including:

- children under the age of three years and individuals without bowel control must wear a swim diaper and waterproof swim pants

-MORE-

Page 2 of 2 – First Human Case of West Nile Virus Confirmed

- swimmers must not swim if they have diarrhea or have had diarrhea in the last two weeks
- pool owners must respond properly to fecal accidents in swimming pools.

Besides the new pool regulations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has six suggestions to help you stay safe.

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea, and for two weeks after the disease has cleared.
- Don't swallow the pool water.
- Take a cleansing shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Take the kids on bathroom breaks and check diapers often.
- Change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside.
- Wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming.

Public health officials want Utahns to enjoy the summer and get the most out of the season's recreational opportunities. Staying safe and healthy will go a long way in helping residents make the most of their vacation time.

#

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.